

REMARKS

Pending in the application are claims 1-18, of which claims 1, 15 and 17 are independent. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Double Patenting Rejection

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the close review of the claims. Applicant traverses the obviousness-type double patenting rejection of claims 1-18 as being unpatentable over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638, to which the present application claims priority, because the claims of the present application are patentably distinct from the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638.

For example, the present application is directed to a reinforced connector configured to *reinforce* the connection between the first body and the second body to prevent accidental disconnection of the first and second bodies. In contrast, the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638 are directed to a *breakaway* connector having bodies configured to automatically disengage without damaging the components of the connector.

The claims of the present application recite a connector including a cam tab or engagement recess having an angled back surface that extends at a *negative* angle relative to a radial axis of the connector body (i.e., radially forward and axially backward). The claimed angled back surface is specifically designed to inhibit a receptacle tab or engagement recess on a first connector half from releasing a collar tab on a second connector half. In contrast, the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638 recite a connector including an engagement tab or recess that is angled to allow the receptacle tab to *release* the collar tab upon application of a predetermined force to a connector body. The claimed invention thus seek to achieve the exact opposite result of the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638, and is not therefore an obvious variation of the invention of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638.

Moreover, the term of a patent granted on the present application *could not* extend beyond the term of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638, because the present application claims priority to

U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638 and would therefore expire with U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638. In particular, because the present application claims priority to U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638, shared subject matter between the two applications will have the same patent term, i.e., twenty years from the earliest filing date claimed under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120, 121, or 365(c), which is the same for both applications.

However, in order to expedite allowance of the present application, Applicant submits herewith a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c), as requested by the Examiner. The terminal disclaimer disclaims the terminal part of the statutory term of any patent granted on the instant application, which would extend beyond the expiration date of the full statutory term of U.S. Patent No. 6,776,638.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the obviousness-type double patenting rejection of claims 1-18 be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the application pass to allowance.

CONCLUSION

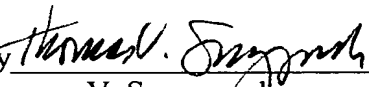
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant contends that claims 1-18 are allowable. As such, the Applicant respectfully requests that all outstanding rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the application be passed to allowance.

If there are any remaining issues, an opportunity for an interview is requested prior to the issuance of another Office Action. If the above amendments are not deemed to place this case in condition for allowance, the Examiner is urged to call the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

In the separate Fee Transmittal, Applicant authorizes the Patent Office to charge the Statutory Disclaimer fee to Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. ALS-017CP, from which the undersigned is authorized to draw herewith. Applicant believes no additional fee is due with this response. However, if an additional fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. ALS-017CP from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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